

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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MOSES LEWIS

Plaintiff,

-against-

CITY OF NEW YORK, POLICE OFFICER JASON
JACKSON SHIELD 10260, POLICE OFFICER MARK
WHIRL SHIELD 09207, JOHN DOE POLICE OFFICERS
#1-2,

**FIRST AMENDED
COMPLAINT AND
JURY DEMAND**

12CV0975 (JG)(JMA)

ECF CASE

Defendants.
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PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. This is a civil rights action in which plaintiff seeks relief for the violation of his rights secured by 42 USC §1983, §1988 and the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, and the laws and Constitution of the State of New York.

2. The claim arises from a March 15, 2011, incident in which Officers of the New York City Police Department ("NYPD"), acting under color of state law, intentionally and willfully subjected plaintiff to, among other things, false arrest and excessive force.

3. Plaintiff seeks monetary damages (special, compensatory, and punitive) against defendants, as well as an award of costs and attorneys' fees, and such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

JURISDICTION

4. This action is brought pursuant to 28 USC §1331, 42 USC §1983, and the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. Pendent party jurisdiction and supplementary jurisdiction over plaintiff's state law claims are asserted.

5. The amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000.00 excluding interest and costs.

6. Venue is laid within the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York in that Defendant City of New York is located within and a substantial part of the events giving rise to the claim occurred within the boundaries of the Eastern District of New York.

PARTIES

7. Plaintiff is a citizen of the United States and at all times here relevant resided in Queens County, City and State of New York.

8. The City of New York is a municipal corporation organized under the laws of the State of New York.

9. All other individual defendants ("the officers") are employees of the NYPD, and are sued in their individual capacities.

10. At all times here mentioned defendants were acting under color of state law, to wit, under color of the statutes, ordinances, regulations, policies, customs and usages of the City and State of New York.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

11. On March 15, 2011, plaintiff was home from college, visiting his mother during spring break at 640 Stanley Ave. At approximately 9:15PM, plaintiff ran to the store to grab something to eat. He returned to his building and pressed the elevator call button. While waiting for the elevator, an unmarked car pulled up outside and a tall man with glasses approached plaintiff. Without identifying himself, the man grabbed plaintiff's arm. Frightened, plaintiff pulled his arm back.

12. A moment later, another individual approached who was wearing a badge. This officer, with the assistance of the first officer on the scene, grabbed plaintiff, struck him in the face and then purposely sprayed plaintiff with mace in his eyes. Plaintiff was dragged from the location

while he repeatedly called out for his mother.

13. Plaintiff was taken to the 75th precinct where he was treated by EMS. Almost 48 hours later, plaintiff was brought before a judge where he learned he was being charged with smoking a cigarette inside the building, assault on an officer and resisting arrest. Plaintiff was released without bail.

14. After returning to court many times over the next several months, plaintiff was granted an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal. The criminal matter will be dismissed and sealed on May 21, 2012.

15. At all times during the events described above, the defendant police officers were engaged in a joint venture and formed an agreement to violate plaintiff's rights. The individual officers assisted each other in performing the various actions described and lent their physical presence and support and the authority of their office to each other during said events. They failed to intervene in the obviously illegal actions of their fellow officers against plaintiff.

16. During all of the events above described, defendants acted maliciously and with intent to injure plaintiff.

17. As a direct and proximate result of the acts of defendants, plaintiff suffered the following injuries and damages:

- a. Violation of his rights pursuant to the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution to be free from an unreasonable search and seizure of his person;
- b. Violation of his right to Due Process of Law under the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution;
- c. Violation of his New York State Constitutional rights under Article 1, Section 12

to be free from an unreasonable search and seizure;

d. Violation of his New York State Constitutional right under Article 1, Section 6 to Due Process of Law;

e. Physical pain and suffering;

f. Emotional trauma and suffering, including fear, embarrassment, humiliation, emotional distress, frustration, extreme inconvenience, anxiety; and

g. Loss of liberty.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION
(42 USC § 1983)

18. The above paragraphs are here incorporated by reference.

19. Defendants acted under color of law and conspired to deprive plaintiff of his civil, constitutional and statutory rights to be free from unreasonable search and seizure and to due process of law pursuant to the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution and are liable to plaintiff under 42 U.S.C. §§1983.

20. Plaintiff has been damaged as a result of defendants' wrongful acts.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION
(MUNICIPAL LIABILITY)

21. The above paragraphs are here incorporated by reference.

22. The City is liable for the damages suffered by plaintiff as a result of the conduct of their employees, agents, and servants, in that, after learning of their employees' violation of plaintiff's constitutional rights, they failed to remedy the wrong; they have created a policy or custom under which unconstitutional practices occurred and allowed such policies or customs to continue, and they have been grossly negligent in managing subordinates who caused the unlawful condition or event.

23. The City has been alerted to the regular use of excessive force and false arrests by its police officers, but has nevertheless exhibited deliberate indifference to such excessive force and false arrests; that deliberate indifference caused the violation of plaintiff's constitutional rights in this case.

24. The aforesaid event was not an isolated incident. The City has been aware for some time, from lawsuits, notices of claim, complaints filed with the Civilian Complaint Review Board, and judicial rulings suppressing evidence and finding officers incredible as a matter of law, that a disturbing number of his police officers use excessive force, unlawfully search and seize citizens, bring charges against citizens with no legal basis, perjure themselves in charging instruments and testimony, and fail to intervene in and report the obviously illegal actions of his fellow officers. Nevertheless, the City has allowed policies and practices that allow the aforementioned to persist.

25. For example, the well documented failures of the Civilian Complaint Review Board ("the CCRB"), a City agency, to substantiate obviously meritorious citizen complaints have gone uncorrected. The CCRB regularly finds complainants lack credibility based on the fact that such complainants have also brought lawsuits to remedy the wrongs they have experienced, a practice that often results in not substantiating the most serious charges brought to them. In addition, the CCRB virtually never initiates their own findings of false statements against officers who have made false statements to the CCRB in their own defense, nor do they initiate findings that officers have failed to report their fellow officers' misconduct; thus, officers have no real incentive to come forward, or to testify truthfully at the CCRB. The CCRB has no enforcement mechanisms once making a finding against an officer; it can only make recommendations to the NYPD, once finding misconduct by an officer.

26. The NYPD, once receiving a substantiated complaint by the CCRB, fails to adequately discipline officers for misconduct. The NYPD Department Advocate, which is endowed with the responsibility of following up on substantiated CCRB charges, is understaffed and underutilized. Furthermore, in the extraordinarily rare event that the CCRB substantiates a complaint and the Department Advocate proves the case in an internal trial against an officer, the police commissioner still maintains the power to reduce the discipline against such an officer, which Commissioner Kelly has done on many occasions.

27. Further, the City has no procedure to notify individual officers or his supervisors of unfavorable judicial review of his conduct. Without this notification, improper search and seizure practices and incredible testimony go uncorrected. Additionally, according to a report of the New York City Bar Association issued in 2000, the City has isolated his law department from the discipline of police officers, so that civil suits against police officers for actions taken in his capacity as police officers have no impact on the officers' careers, regardless of the outcome of the civil actions. Alan Hevesi, as New York City Comptroller, in 1999 reported that there was a "a total disconnect" between the settlements of even substantial civil claims and police department action against officers.

28. The City is aware that all of the aforementioned has resulted in violations of citizens' constitutional rights. Despite such notice, the City has failed to take corrective action. This failure and these policies caused the officers in the present case to violate plaintiff's civil rights, without fear of reprisal.

29. Plaintiff has been damaged as a result of the deliberate indifference of the City to the constitutional rights of the City's inhabitants.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION
(CONSTITUTIONAL TORT)

30. All preceding paragraphs are here incorporated by reference.

31. Defendants, acting under color of law, violated plaintiff's rights pursuant to §§6 and 12 of the New York State Constitution.

32. A damages remedy here is necessary to effectuate the purposes of §§6 and 12 of the New York State Constitution, and appropriate to ensure full realization of plaintiff's rights under those sections.

WHEREFORE, plaintiff demands judgment against the defendants, jointly and severally, as follows:

- A. In favor of plaintiff in an amount to be determined by a jury for each of plaintiff's causes of action;
- B. Awarding plaintiff punitive damages in an amount to be determined by a jury;
- C. Awarding plaintiff reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and disbursements of this action; and
- D. Granting such other and further relief as this Court deems just and proper.

JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury.

DATED: Brooklyn, New York
May 30, 2012

TO: New York City
Officer Jason Jackson
Corporation Counsel Office
100 Church Street, 4th floor
New York, NY 10007

Officer Mark Whirl #09207
75th Precinct
1000 Sutter Avenue
Brooklyn NY 11208

Yours, etc.,



Stoll, Glickman & Bellina, LLP
By: NICOLE BELLINA, ESQ.
Attorney for Plaintiff
475 Atlantic Ave. Fl. 3
Brooklyn, NY 11217
(718) 852-3710 x103